**Introduction**

The League of Nations was the brain child of Woodrow Wilson, an association that he wanted to see promoting collective security, self-determination, disarmament and upholding the world peace after the First World War. The League was accused of being an organization that supported the interests of the victors of the World War, but it did have both its successes and its failures, as described below. 

**Successes**

* The League established the International Labour Organisation which improved working conditions for employees across the world. This was hitherto unheard of and benefited workers greatly because the League established fix working hours and standards of minimum wages. The League also ensured working standards that are similar to the ones today, including sick leave and pensions.
* Another successful organization established by the League was the Refugee Organisation. The First World War left hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war who had to be released and transported back to their homeland. The Refugee Organisation resettled 500,000 prisoners that were previously stuck in Russia.
* Research work was carried out under the Health Organisation, which succeeded in dealing with Typhus in Russia and initiated research on leprosy.
* The Mandates Commission ensured that newly formed countries were governed efficiently and being prepared for independence.
* The League peacefully resolved a dispute between Sweden and Finland in 1920. The intervention of the League helped avoid a war between the two. The League also settled a dispute between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925, Albania and Yugoslavia, and Turkey and Iraq over controversial territorial borders, again preventing war in each case.
* The League also helped Austria and Hungary recover from the economic crisis caused by the war indemnities that they were compelled to pay. The League helped save both countries from bankruptcy.
* The League oversaw trade and helped to decrease incidents of smuggling (especially of opium) and sex slavery.

**Failures**

* The League was weakened by the absence of the United States and Russia and was further weakened when Italy and Japan left the League. This meant that the League did not have sound financial backing to rely upon. It also meant that the League was not recognized as a global authority. This had implications later on when Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan came under dictatorial rule—these powers were not part of the League and so could simply ignore its resolutions.
* The League had no military force of its own.
* The League was poorly organized and only met once a year. This meant that it could not deal with issues immediately and effectively.
* The League’s members were notorious for their non-cooperative attitudes. The League’s power suffered due to lack of unity and resurges of nationalism. As a result, when faced by Germany and Italy’s growing power, the League was forced to take up a “policy of appeasement” which failed to curb the growth of these two countries altogether.
* An economic crisis took place throughout the world in 1929. This affected the entire world and cast the major powers of the League into an economic depression, a period of decline for the League of Nations and a period of growth for the dictatorial powers of Japan, Germany and Italy. The League was left behind as an ineffectual and powerless organization.
* The League’s project for world disarmament was another failure that arose out of the non-cooperative nature of the League’s members. None of the League’s members was ready to disarm its own army and potentially weaken its national power.